

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03341 161129Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 ACDA-12 /106 W
-----096373 161158Z /47

P R 131405Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1388
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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CAPE FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, PINS, MOPS, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MORE CIVILIAN KILLINGS

REF: PRETORIA 2887

1. PRESS ACCOUNTS STATE THAT OVER THE JUNE 10 WEEKEND,
THE MILITARY REPORTED THE KILLING OF 21 CIVILIANS AND ONE
GUERRILLA BY SECURITY FORCES IN CHINAMORA TRIBAL TRUST
LAND, JUST 12 KILOMETERS NORTH OF SALISBURY. THE MILITARY
ACCOUNT REPORTEDLY SAYS THAT GUERRILLAS WERE SIGHTED
IN THE VILLAGE AND "IN THE ENSUING ACTION" THE CIVILIANS
WERE KILLED. IT SAYS THE SECURITY FORCES WERE FIRED ON
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AND AFTER THE SUBSEQUENT FIGHT, COMMUNIST WEAPONS, INCLUDING
SMALL ARMS AND MORTARS, WERE FOUND IN THE VILLAGE. TWO
ACCOUNTS, HOWEVER, CITE EYE-WITNESSES WHO SAY THE
GUERRILLAS WERE SEEN ON A NEARBY HILL AND, WHEN
ENGAGED, ONE OF THEM SOUGHT COVER IN THE VILLAGE.
THE HUT INTO WHICH HE FLED WAS FIRED UPON. INSIDE
IT AND ANOTHER NEARBY HUT THAT ALSO RECEIVED FIRE

WHERE THE CIVILIANS, ALL OF WHOM, EXCEPT THREE, WERE
WOMEN AND CHILDREN. ALL WERE KILLED.

2. SUBSEQUENT PRESS ACCOUNTS SAY THAT IN SALISBURY
THE COMBINED OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS WAS TRYING TO
SURPRESS THE RELEASE OF THE STORY. THEY STATE THAT
THE UANC AND OTHER PARTIES ISSUED STATEMENTS
CONDEMNING THE INCIDENT BUT REPORTERS WERE BARRED
FROM USING THEM. REPORTS GO ON TO QUOTE BRIEFLY FROM
THE UANC STATEMENT, SIGNED BY PUBLICITY SECRETARY
DAVID MUKONO. "MORE INNOCENT VILLAGERS HAVE DIED WITHIN
THE 90 DAYS OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT THAN MANY
OTHER SIMILAR PERIODS BEFORE," MUKONO SAYS. "REPORTS
OF KILLINGS, NOT TO MENTION RAPINGS AND TORTURE, BY
THE SECURITY FORCES COME INTO THE UANC HEAD OFFICE...
ON ADAILY BASIS. ALL SUCH REPORTS ARE CHECKED AND
ALWAYS PROVED CORRECT," HE SAID. MUKONO ADDED THAT THE
ARMY'S BEHAVIOUR IS THE MAJOR REASON THE WEST DOES
NOT TRUST THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT AND CALLED FOR THE
WITHDRAWAL OF ALL TRROPS FROM RURAL AREAS.

3. COMMENT: FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS OF THE GUTU
KILLINGS (REFTEL) THESE APPARENTLY INDISCRIMINATE
SHOOTINGS BY THE SECURITY FORCES ADD YET ANOTHER
NEGATIVE FACTOR TO THE PERCEIVED WORKABILITY OF
THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. WHATEVER THE FACTS BEHIND
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THE INCIDENT, IT AGAIN SHOWS THAT SECURITY FORCES
DO WORK IN THE "SHOOT FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS LATER"
BASIS. THIS TACTIC, WHICH IS BOUND TO CLAIM CIVILIAN
LIVES, CAN ONLY EXACERBATE RURAL AFRICAN OPINION
AGAINST THE SECURITY FORCES AND, BY IMPLICATION, THE
INTERIM GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANTS.
EDMONDSON

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Concepts: REPORTS, COUNTERINSURGENCY, DEATHS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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